

of a people who more than 200 years ago took up arms against a tyrant whose forces occupied their land. But they were a stubborn bunch, a people who fought for their freedoms and appealed to all those who believed in democracy to help their cause. And their cries were answered, and a new nation was born, a nation that ever since has believed that the rights of

life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness should be denied to none.

May God bless the people of the United States and the cause of freedom. Good night.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Haiti September 16, 1994

The President. Thank you for coming in; I'm glad to see you. I wanted to make three quick points. One is, we had a detailed briefing this morning from General Shalikashvili, and I feel good about the extraordinary work and preparation that our military leaders have done. Second, we're up to 24 nations now participating in the coalition, and I feel very good about that. I think there will be more; I think we'll have more before very long. And the third thing that I want to say is, I've seen a copy of the remarks that President Aristide is going to deliver today, and I'm pleased with that. I think it is very important, in light of all the things that have occurred from the time he was elected forward, that this message of reconciliation be genuine, sincere, and straightforward. And I think it will be, and I feel good about that.

And I know some of you have been somewhat skeptical of that. And I would remind you that there's one event which has occurred in recent times which I think will reinforce it, and that is the meeting in Paris which got together the proposed aid package for Haiti to create the economic opportunity for the Haitians, which I think is clearly premised on the right sort of spirit of going forward down there and the whole promise of reconciliation being realized. So I feel good about it. And Admiral Miller's done a marvelous job. I thank you, sir, for what you've done.

Anyway, I didn't mean to interrupt the briefing—[laughter]—see so many—

Q. Are you nervous?

The President. Am I nervous? No, I feel good about it. I don't know if good is the right word. I think the policy is right, and I think that I have done the best I could to present it to

the American people and we have done the best we could to prepare. And I have enormous confidence in the work that others have done. I think they have done the best they could.

We don't live in a risk-free world, and there are risks associated with anything we did or didn't do. But I think we're doing the right thing, and I think we have the right people doing the right thing. That's all I could ever ask for. And I've made the decision, so if it doesn't go right, I'm responsible.

Q. Secretary Christopher says that he expects more public support and more support on the Hill now, Mr. President. Do you expect to get fairly strong support in Congress now?

The President. I don't know; I can't answer that. I hope so. But he may know more about it than I do. All I can tell you is I've done the very best I could, and I hope they'll be supportive for it. I'm encouraged by the indications that the American people are more supportive. My sense is that the important things to a lot of Americans about last night were—first of all, I think more and more are learning about the human rights abuses and how that reinforces the arguments we made about immigration and democracy. But I think most of the people are focused on that.

But the two things I think that a lot of Americans got last night from an informational point of view were, one, the extraordinary efforts we have made in the diplomatic area and the patience we've shown and the rebuffs we've received over a long period of time. And two, I think a lot of Americans had forgotten about the Governors Island Agreement and that it was broken. And most Americans think when you make a deal with this country, you ought to

keep it. And so I feel—all I can tell you is I feel good about it.

Q. Why did you wait so long to make your case to the American people?

The President. Well, I've been talking about this all along, you know. I waited so long to make an Oval Office address because you can only make—I mean, it's only appropriate to make one Oval Office address on a subject like this. And we have done the best we could. We exhausted all other alternatives. I thought this was the right time. I did the best I could with it.

Adm. Paul Miller. Mr. President, before you leave, can I just report one thing to you? Yesterday I was at Fort Drum up in New York; that's the 10th Mountain. And one of the commanders mentioned that a battalion of troops are going to be involved. There was 50-some that could leave the Army before the projected time was

up, and 21 of them said, "We want to stay." So that shows support from the uniformed side, from the practitioner, the youngster. They want to be there, and that's what the call to duty was. I just wanted to mention that.

The President. Thank you very much. Two young men—when we were in Berlin a few months ago and cased the colors of the Berlin Brigade and I met with some of the young soldiers there, two of them asked me to please delay any action in Haiti until they got home so they could go. That's very rewarding. Thank you, sir.

Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Adm. Paul D. Miller was Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Meeting of the Multinational Coalition on Haiti September 16, 1994

President Aristide, Prime Minister Arthur, distinguished Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors, Charges, the Representative of the United Nations, my colleagues in the United States, I begin by saying a simple thank you. Thank you to all the nations here represented for joining an international coalition to restore democratic government to Haiti as called for by United Nations Security Council Resolution 940.

Your presence here demonstrates that this international coalition is strong, diverse, and growing. We have countries from the Caribbean, countries from Latin America, countries from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, united in our insistence that the enemies of democracy who now terrorize Haiti leave and leave now and that democratically elected government be returned.

And thank you, President Aristide, for your remarks, for your commitment to democracy and your commitment to reconciliation, for your commitment to the long, hard work of rebuilding your economy and your society, and for your commitment to the future of democracy as evidenced by your comments about the next elec-

tion. I think your statement that in a democracy the most important election is always the second one may become a staple of civics books in our country and perhaps throughout the world.

For 3 years, the international community has done everything it could think of to do to restore Haiti's democratic government peacefully, to end this brutal reign of terror in our hemisphere. We have tried everything. Often our envoys have been rebuffed. Often just a simple request for talk has been denied.

On one occasion an agreement was reached here in the United States, where General Cedras came and actually signed the Governors Island Agreement, committing the military dictators to give up power in return for the spirit of reconciliation about which President Aristide spoke. When the day came for that plan to take effect, the coup leaders went back on their word and refused to leave. And all our efforts since have failed to budge them. As all of you know, the atrocities have only gotten worse. And recently, the leaders even refused to meet with the U.N. Special Envoy.

We have an interest, obviously, in many things: the importance of spreading democracy;